

NEWS FROM ED MARKEY

United States Congress

Massachusetts Seventh District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Israel Klein

September 2, 2003

(202) 225-2836

AIR MARSHALS, PASSENGERS STILL PUT IN DANGER BY UNSCREENED, UNINSPECTED AIR CARGO

Rep. Markey: Reshuffling fails to fill gaping hole in passenger airline security

WASHINGTON, DC- Representative Edward Markey (D-MA), a senior Member of the Select Committee on Homeland Security today released a statement on the Department of Homeland Security shifting the Air Marshals program from the Transportation Security Administration to Immigration and Customs Enforcement:

"No matter how many air marshals we put on the passenger deck, fifty percent of what is carried in the cargo hold is completely unscreened and uninspected and offers a well-known avenue for passenger-plane terrorism. Al Qaeda continues to put passenger planes at the top of their terrorist target list," Rep. Markey said. "While bombs without boarding passes can be loaded on passenger planes, the Bush Administration continues to play bureaucratic musical chairs."

"Despite an overwhelming vote in the House (278-146) to force the Bush Administration to screen commercial cargo allowed on passenger planes, the Administration has failed to institute such screening. My amendment to the Homeland Security Appropriations bill would close the air cargo loophole permanently because it mandates that cargo must be screened or inspected just as each passenger and their bags are screened and inspected. The American public should not be asked to subscribe to a faith-based security system when they fly on passenger planes."

Additional information on homeland security is available at Rep. Markey's website,
<http://www.house.gov/markey>.

#